Domestic Political Intelligence: Frank Donner (KPFA, 1975)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYYT241ivY8 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYYT241ivY8)

Uploaded by Our Hidden History (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbfzszfxZr4qmeZjZ_3R_Pw) on Thu Mar 18 2021.

Part 6/8, FULL PLAYLIST: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBINnEpNu5u4JT8zYGSCA_CgwXRT3otHX
ORIGINAL, PLEASE VISIT: https://www.pacificaradioarchives.org/keyword-search?search_api_views_fulltext=cia+world+peace
PRA Archive #: BC2579.01-08
The CIA And World Peace - Series of lectures exploring the role of the Central Intelligence Agency in United States foreign relations and world affairs.
RECORDED: Yale University, New haven Connecticut.
BROADCAST: KPFA, 5 Apr. 1975.

For more related content, please visit:
http://ourhiddenhistory.org/
https://archive.org/details/@altviewstv-fanclub

00:00:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYYT241ivY8)

on april 5th 1975 a conference entitled the central intelligence agency and world peace was held in new haven connecticut on the campus of yale university from one of the afternoon workshops of the conference professor frank donner author of the un-americans provides an overview of domestic surveillance carried out by the cia fbi and other government agencies he also details the extent and legality of spying on american citizens frank donner i want to talk to you about domestic political intelligence which is not merely a mode of operation but a mode of government a clandestine system of social and political controls that outruns the forms of law domestic political intelligence in the sense that i use it consists of three parts the first is operations the second is the product or the files and the third is a body of assumptions the philosophy of intelligence the political theory of intelligence if you will now intelligence uh is in a democratic society an anomaly that is uh it is a form of control which is usually not recognized and justified on other reasons for other reasons its origin it has it has two sources first the military every domestic political intelligence system is rooted in military controls for

00:02:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYYT241ivY8&t=120s)

is rooted in military controls for example in britain uh mi5 military intelligence is a is a term it's a is a domestic intelligence operation but still bears the imprint of its military origin the second origin of domestic political intelligence is diplomacy or statecraft that is the relations of nations to other nations now i should say that i'm talking about a system which is unrelated to law enforcement but for which law enforcement frequently serves as a cover and i should begin perhaps by observing that like every stigmatized calling intelligence has developed a great cosmetic rhetoric a way of disguising what it really is and what it really does you me you may recall for example that hunt when he testified did not speak of casing dr fielding's office but of making a judgment visit uh and so throughout the vocabulary of intelligence we find a kind of pseudo-professionalizing a rhetoric which as i say is intended to cosmetize what is really involved and words like one of the most

important of this uh uh intelligence lingo is mission a mission is a which on its face bears the imprint of its military origins is a way that every surveillance agency has of ideal ideologizing its function that is it gives itself some superordinate kind of role uh which which as it which is an interpretation which happens

00:04:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYYT241ivY8&t=240s)

which is an interpretation which happens to suit its convenience and of course there are a great many other uh terms for example uh uh one speaks uh not of an informer but of a source even the word intelligence has a kind of awe-inspiring resonance which is quite remote from the reality of what it is the other point that i ought to make about intelligence is is that it is typically secret and in this country in any way at any rate an executive function that it is a means of promoting uh the power of the executive and defending the executive against attacks from critics now let me now turn to the assumptions the political theory of intelligence it hardly needs to be said anybody who reads the paper will recognize that intelligence is a resource of conservative politics uh there are no progressive liberal intelligence people that i know of that are still in the agencies uh second uh the basic uh commitment the mission if you will of american intelligence is the long twilight struggle for supremacy the struggle against subversion against revolution and so on uh and that is a deeply held uh uh commitment the notion that there's going to be an apocalyptic showdown with the bad guys and we have to know who they are and we have to keep them on file and watch them and this notion of some ultimate showdown with the forces of revolution is very deeply rooted in us not only in our politics but in our culture and it and its origins really go back to

00:06:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYYT241ivY8&t=360s)

and it and its origins really go back to the american response to the russian revolution in the 20s the idea that there's going to be a bolshevik style revolution in the country where blood will flow and so on has has deeply gripped the american imagination of course intelligence has a powerful to use a sociological term negative bias uh that is it it's it sees uh the targets of its subversive targets everywhere and this is not only an occupational characteristic of intelligence people but a political necessity in order to justify its existence especially in a democratic society it must naturally exaggerate the power the intentions and the number of the enemy this is the source of course of the constant funding that intelligence receives over the years next as a part of this body of assumptions i'm talking about is the notion of foreign instigation is that this that manifestations of social unrest or protest are instigated by some a foreign agent uh as a product of some plot hatched abroad some serpent in our paradise uh and uh this again is a deeply rooted kind of assumption of the intelligence world and you may recall that one of uh president nixon's early assignments uh was to ask the cia whether domestic intelligence movements had some foreign instigation and he was enormously disappointed to learn that it wasn't so especially after

00:08:02 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYYT241ivY8&t=482s)

that it wasn't so especially after one of his transcripts revealed that mr haldeman said wouldn't it be a good idea to to label all this peace stuff as part of a foreign plot so now i come to another aspect of intelligence which is it's it that it individuates social protest and dissent the great uh the great uh scare figure in the intelligence world is the agitator uh this sinister fellow that comes in to an otherwise contented scene and disrupts and this notion that protest has no social dimension what is simply the product of subversive agitation is a very deeply held assumption of intelligence and finally there is an intelligence assumption that no matter how innocent an act may seem or how justified a form of protest may be it may ultimately turn out to be part of a sinister jigsaw puzzle of which you only have a seemingly innocuous part and so everything is grist for the intelligence mill now now let me now having all to briefly sketch the assumptions of intelligence let's talk with equal brevity about intelligence institutions there are institutions that exist on the federal level and on the local level there are some 20 federal institutions that are part of what again one of those charming words that's always beguiled me the intelligence community uh that is the the institutions

00:10:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYYT241ivY8&t=600s)

uh that is the the institutions that are bound together by common assumptions that engage in um some form of liaison liaison intelligence i like the british verb the british say to liaise uh when they talk about their intelligence system that is uh uh the intelligence agencies like to develop a point where they can exchange information some of them have more operational capability than others and some of them have better files than others and they trade off whenever they can whenever they can in order to achieve their mission uh then there's of course a cia the irs the civil service commission congressional committees these are all basically have some intelligence functions some more than others and and of course we have we have on the local level uh local anti-subversive units which have no real law enforcement responsibilities either and state units that are all part of this still encode intelligence community now i just reminded myself that i've forgotten to mention one other point about american intelligence which is that it likes to picture itself as defensive foreign intelligence agents are very amused at the ease with which we call intelligence operations counter intelligence that is that we all we are doing is trying to defend our institutions from the activities and the machinations of foreign spies and so our intelligence is counter intelligence whereas theirs is you know what now and of course you see for example uh

00:12:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYYT241ivY8&t=720s)

and of course you see for example uh very uh uh melodramatized if you will uh uh uses of this like the charge that as the cia these cia disclosures become public the kgb is just convulsed with glee over the fact that they now are are now have such uh uh an easier time of it because their traditional enemies are in disarray and so on and this notion you see of of uh a threatened innocence a compromised innocence by the spies of the other side is again something that's deeply remote rooted in american intelligence practice now uh there's another characteristic of american intelligence institutions which i find fascinating and that is almost every one of them is characterized by an abuse of power that is an attempt to convert some delegation of authority uh which has some substantive importance uh into an independent exercise of intelligence power of course the probably the most uh clear example of that are congressional committees which for years used their powers for intelligence purposes but claimed that they were for legislative purposes uh the recent uh flurry of grand juries the cia the irs have all converted powers that were granted for other reasons into an intelligence function and of course uh the best example of that really uh is the fbi uh and let me just stop a moment because i

00:14:02 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYYT241ivY8&t=842s)

and let me just stop a moment because i think that if there's anything that i say and i'm not vain enough to think any of it is very important except one thing and i i really there's one thing that i would like you to go away with it's this that for over three decades the fbi has been engaging in political surveillance unrelated to law enforcement without any legitimate authority now uh uh i used to be a voice crying in the wilderness about this but apparently it's now reached the ears of congress and other people the fbi traditionally justified its powers to engage in people-watching that is surveillance unrelated to law enforcement on the basis of a memorandum that was sent on september 6 1939 to the attorney general by president roosevelt in which he said in effect um look we're entering a war uh we have to worry about sabotage we have to worry about spies and so and and so i would like you to set up an intelligence capability for this purpose now long after the war passed uh through the mccarthy era through the cold war this letter of roosevelt's received this artificial resuscitation repeatedly and was torn from its context and used as an authority for people watching unrelated to law enforcement a memorandum and it says i have your memorandum of april august 6 1973 which recommends the

00:16:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYYT241ivY8&t=960s)

august 6 1973 which recommends the issuance of an executive order concerning the authority of the fbi to conduct domestic intelligence operations in other words on august 6 1973 director kelly writes a letter to the attorney general saying please get me an executive order authorizing me to engage in the kind of thing we've been doing for over 30 years and he says your memorandum indicates i'm reading now from this uh

document your memorandum indicates that the proposed order is designed to accomplish several objectives one to establish that the fbi has been instructed to engage in domestic intelligence operations two to supplement the statutory authority of the fbi by death by delegating any constitutional power the president may have in this area and three to direct the attorney general to establish guidelines for domestic intelligence i know i'm getting boring but this is 30 years late too late now why did we tolerate this kind of usurpation of power for 30 years and how after reviewing that experience can we smugly sit back and say it can't happen here what what uh repressive forces were at work in the society uh that could not prevent the cry that the emperor has no clothes from being heard i'm i don't know the answer to that but i just leave leave you to ponder it now when i don't want you to think that just because kelly no longer admits or no longer

00:18:01 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYYT241ivY8&t=1081s)

kelly no longer admits or no longer claims that he has authority to engage in political intelligence that he stopped oh no now he does exactly the same thing as he did before but now he's trotted out a law enforcement justification you know my i would like uh my epitaph to read illegality breeds deception that deception is the price we pay for survival in a democracy kelly could not stop doing what he was doing before because it was illegal he now engages he now puts forth a counterfeit justification the counterfeit justification is all these people that he's been watching are revolutionaries they're embryonic saboteurs and that he is merely enforcing the laws against sabotage against treason against sedition now it's quite true that the laws against sedition haven't been uh enforced in almost a generation now but who knows you can't be too careful when the life of the nation is at stake and so again a deception the deception a that you're engaged in law enforcement a b that the people you're surveilling are really threatening to violate some law even though their right to do what they're doing is protected by the constitution in a deception that our security is so fragile that these people have to be wiretapped and infiltrated otherwise

00:20:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYYT241ivY8&t=1200s)

and infiltrated otherwise we may be faced with an unacceptable threat to our national safety now what a pile of deception that is uh uh what a what a what a a gross misuse of power to pretend that kind of thing and yes that's what it is now another price we pay for living in a democracy it's getting to be very expensive if you'll notice uh is that you have to create in the popular mind a fear that our national security is really threatened you know we americans are programmed for fear uh we approach we for example we are terrified that if we don't use the right antifreeze our car will go over or if you don't wear the right bra use the right toothpaste or whatever the whole society is built we try to convert our anxieties into consumption we also try to convert them into repression uh and so every intelligence agency must at some point become a sort of ministry of propaganda it has to revive and freshen up the fears which tolerate this sort of thing or which permitted to go on and uh and so for example uh the of course the classic example of this was hoover director of the fbi jay edgar hoover who had a stock technique which was a dual strategy of alarm and containment he would always say that the reds are getting stronger and stronger and they're right almost almost but but he couldn't say that they had

00:22:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYYT241ivY8&t=1320s)

he couldn't say that they had actually attained their goal largely because it would defy to obviously defy the reality and also because it would show that the fbi wasn't doing a very good job and so he says he would say oh it's it's worse than ever uh they're now sure they've lost their numbers their membership but they're now down to their hard core and so were these metaphors of the tip of the iceberg the hardcore the fellow travelers uh uh the um trojan horse uh all of these metaphors of conspiracy craft and cunning uh he he he continually kept the menace alive uh and always got the kinds of appropriations that he wanted uh and of course this is as i said this is the price in a totalitarian totalitarian state you just do it but here you have to lie about why you have to do it because there are norms that you have to comply with now um and so we we have this kind of we've been victims of this kind of manipulation in propaganda for a very long time now you mustn't think that hoover didn't know better because part of every intelligence system is some form of a

professional evaluation and hoover had reports that the fb that the communist party was was not gaining in power he had reports that the socialist workers party was not gaining in power but he suppressed them because it didn't suit his purposes and threatened his mission marvelous word that mission now we come to operations operations of any intelligence agency are systemic that is they're an interrelated unified body

00:24:01 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYYT241ivY8&t=1441s)

an interrelated unified body of tactics for acquiring information and for other purposes as well and uh we we have i think concentrated almost too much on the operations and i think we're sort of turned on by uh uh uh things uh these operational uh kinds of uh modes like wiretapping informers and so on uh the important thing to recognize about american intelligence operations is that they are not purely passive the fiction you see this is another one of those deceptions the notion that all these people do is go to meetings and take down reports year after year of the same thing joe blow and alice and mildred all came to the meeting and it was voted so and so and you fill 187 linear feet of file space for one year with this kind of garbage uh no every intelligence operation ultimately becomes aggressive uh ultimately the operation is not a means to the end of enlightening a decision maker but an end in itself a means of harassing uh well of creating a fear in the subjects and of course we see that in the media papers and in many other places and so this is the important thing uh that that intelligence you see if if this were a rational system here you have the fbi it's collecting all this intelligence now everybody knows that

00:26:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYYT241ivY8&t=1560s)

now everybody knows that that a secret police system is not supposed to make policy decisions on the basis of the intelligence it collects it's supposed to channel it to some decision-making body but the fbi never channeled anything it used this as a kind of uh it part of a guerrilla warfare if you will against its subjects a kind of ongoing uh political warfare and uh and so i can't of course engage in counter-intelligence programs we know about the six that have been made public but they've been doing this for a long long time without formal counterintelligence programs incidentally there's another beautiful use of the word counter intelligence that is we were only doing this we were only harassing uh the black activists and the peace forces and the communist party and the socialist workers party because we were trying to frustrate their attempts to spy on us simple so it's called counter intelligence but what it really is is an institutionalized form of the kind of aggression that is implicit in the domestic political intelligence system now i want to speak very briefly about files uh uh you know files have a fascinating mystique uh when uh uh attorney general stone in 1924 went to j edgar hoover and said i want you to cut out all this political intelligence stuff and only investigate when there's probable cause that a crime has been committed that's the standard he also said to hoover unfortunately

00:28:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYYT241ivY8&t=1680s)

he also said to hoover unfortunately we can't eliminate our files that would require an act of congress and so we have forests of files the living in the dead the the children the fathers the sons the grandchildren and of course with technology these things are uh the technology not only of automatic uh data recording but of retrieval and reproduction uh we have we have we are really we really immortalize files i was reading yesterday uh about the irs which in 1973 finally dismantled its intelligence program and i was very eager to see what they would do about the files and i'd say now we're going to see that they're really going to destroy these files oh no they said in their memo they said we're going to select certain files in and we're going to select certain files out they couldn't even bring themselves to say that they were going to destroy those files because they had been gathered in defiance of the mandate of the irs and totally illegally so it's very hard for us to destroy a file it's like destroying a child now uh everybody's getting restless uh and uh i just want to mention one other thing uh we we know this from european intelligence systems but we never seem to learn the lesson that every intelligent system ultimately becomes a mode of blackmail fouche knew about all his all his enemies because his enemies mistresses were in his pay uh and we and hoover knew about his critics in congress because he had something on them

00:30:01 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYYT241ivY8&t=1801s)

something on them and he knew about his allies and he had their support because he had something on them and he knew about the enemies of his allies because he had something on them and so hoover built an enormous system of blackmail full of personal data of all kinds it would just it would it would make you a flesh crawl to see the kinds of things that are in the fbi files about people and some of them will start out by saying this is not a security investigation so we have we have gone the whole route we have reproduced in our time in the past 50 years the very same experience that we are so quick to denounce and criticize in the repressive autocracies of the 19th century uh and i'm i'm afraid and almost cynical about the possibility that congress will do anything about it you know intelligence agencies have what i call a barbarossa syndrome when things get bad they retire to the cave uh and wait for improvement uh and there and all they will do when the now in this adverse climate is again to wait until the climate changes when they will emerge and be doing business as before thank you for more information on the central intelligence agency contact center for national security studies 122 maryland avenue northwest washington dc 2002 this program was produced at radio station wwuh in west hartford connecticut

00:32:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYYT241ivY8&t=1920s)

in west hartford connecticut you

END